

## Letter to Council

To: Council  
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
2515 Waugh Drive  
Houston, TX 77006

From: Charlie Dean

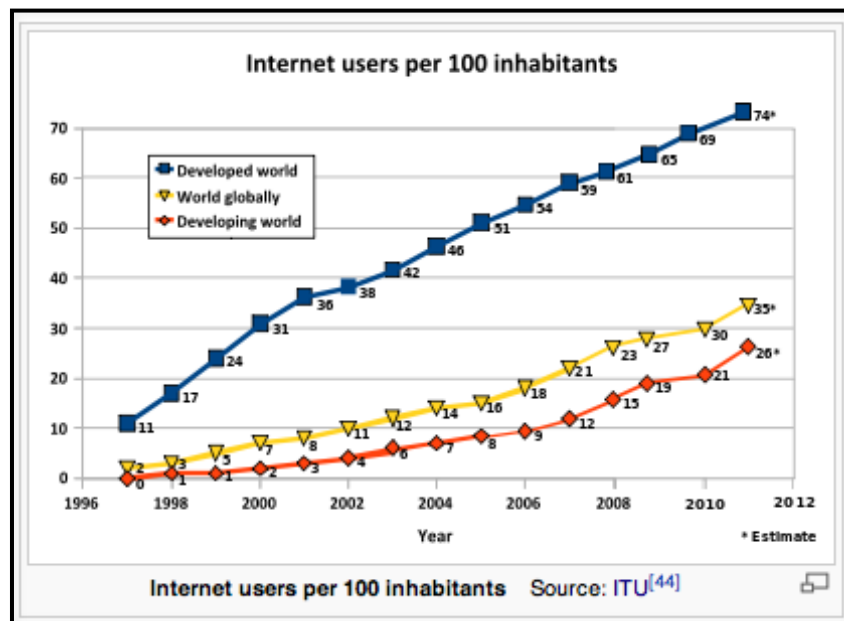
Date: October 1, 2012

Thank you for agreeing to make this letter part of the minutes of your business meeting.

As a new member of Grace Lutheran Church I want to be a contributor, and I'm not talking about money. Grace is one of the poorest churches with respect to wealth, possessions, and resources that I have been around. However, it is rich in the sincerity of its members and the history of the church. I want to be more than a spectator. At this stage in my life, I want to benefit others while I am able.

It is one thing to say that the established way of business is inefficient. It is another to go beyond vagueness and set out a new business model that is clearly more efficient and worth the effort. I want to do this; however, there is not enough space here to do that, but I hope this is a start. Much of what I am addressing relates to **Information Technology**.

The Internet is used more and more each year. If your **Website** fails to be **useful to your users**, and if the Internet becomes more important each year, then there is an inference that your business could be adversely affected by the quality of your Website. Please notice below the blue line (uppermost line, Developed world) between the years 2004 through 2011.



Internet. (2012, July 16). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:08, July 17, 2012, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Internet&oldid=502651873>

Some talents and abilities are more visible than others; i.e., song, music, acting, public speaking. Because of this higher visibility, it is easier to connect such talents to needs. I have heard the expression—*a solution in search of a problem, or a talent in search of a need*. This carries an inference that there really is no problem or need. This inference, I believe, keeps many from volunteering. Perhaps it would help to have a continuously **maintained list** of needs, concerns, suggestions, requests, situations, conditions, and questions, on the church Website. For this to actually be helpful, we would need a designated person to see that efforts at volunteering or inquiring are **followed through** with in a meaningful way.

Perhaps creating new committees would be good, with a more specific division of labor across more committees.

### **Investing in ourselves:**

Many things could fit under this category.

- Making church records (that already exist in digital form) available to everyone online.
- Digitizing the old records and making them available online to everyone also.
- Having an assortment of online teaching or training modules.
- Trimming the hedges outside the church.
- Having plants on rolling carts on the patio, and rolling them inside on Sunday.
- Buying an ice machine.

There are some aspects of Grace that are harder to change than others, such as its location, the age of the building, the landscape around the church, the amount of space inside the building, etc. One aspect that can be changed with very little cost is our **digital footprint**. Visitors as well as members to the Website could easily feel that they are **playing hide-and-seek** when they try to find information. I find no Sitemap on the Website. I see that it does have a SUBJECTS list that corresponds to the labels of the blogs.

Grace Lutheran Church has no common area or physical library where we can thumb through corporate documents, announcements, bulletins, notes, reference material, audio and video material, and essentially a collection of all non-exempt material. While church members have an absolute right to access all non-exempt material, making it all available in hard copy is impossible if not impractical.

A great way to solve this is to create a **digital library**. Digital material lasts way longer than paper and cardboard, it uses no space in the church building, and it is free. Most members use computers and have Internet access. We have within our membership the existing Information Technology knowledge to accomplish this.

I believe a church garners support in various forms if its **Website** clearly shows **openness and transparency**. An e-library that is comprehensive, well organized, and easily accessible would enhance support and respect of any church.

Thank you for your time.